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ABSTRACT

A survey (Jevne, 1981) conducted to determine Canadian counselor competencies revealed that, of the nine areas considered important for counselor training, the 304 respondents in the field of counseling ranked training in consulting as sixth in importance. Prompted by these results, a literature review was conducted to determine if consulting was considered low in priority by other counselors and school personnel. Counselors who responded to other Canadian and several United States surveys have indicated that consulting is a prominent counseling skill and function. Consulting with school staff members was also ranked as an important counselor function by Canadian teachers and administrators. According to the research reviewed, classroom teachers at all levels viewed the areas of student motivation, classroom management, and disruptive behavior as primary problems. In addition, teachers and administrators viewed consulting with a counselor as a potentially useful approach for dealing with such problems. Classroom studies have revealed several effective strategies for improving student motivation and general classroom behavior, including teacher attention, token reinforcement, time-out for positive reinforcement, behavioral contracting, and self-modification. As a consultant, the counselor is best able to assist teachers through inservice training of behavior management techniques which can be implemented in the classroom. (NRB)

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The Counsellor as Consultant

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ABSTRACT

It is the purpose of this article to provide a review of the literature to determine the priority of consulting as a function and training component for school counsellors. It was found that there is an urgent need for counsellors to function as consultants in the areas of classroom management and student motivation. The authors have thus identified several techniques and approaches for implementing a school consultation program.

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THE COUNSELLOR AS CONSULTANT

This article was written as a reaction to Jevne's (1981) survey which was conducted to determine a set of Canadian counsellor competencies. Specifically, the writers are reacting to the perceived status of consulting as a counselling training component and function.

Of nine areas considered important for inclusion in a counsellor training program, the 304 Canadian counsellors, counsellor supervisors, counsellor educators and counsellor trainees who responded to Jevne's questionnaire ranked training in consulting as sixth in importance. Of ten functions that counsellors should be prepared to perform, consulting was ranked seventh.

These data led the writers to review the literature to determine if consulting was considered to be of such low priority by respondents of other similar questionnaires or by potential recipients of counselling services, namely school personnel. In addition, the literature pertaining to the perceived needs of teachers and administrators was reviewed. The purpose of these reviews was to determine whether or not the status of consulting needs to be re-examined by the practitioner and whether consulting is worthy of a prominent

place in counsellor training programs. Finally, these reviews led the writers to suggest a set of counselling procedures that warrant consideration by the counsellor consultant.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSULTING AS DETERMINED FROM OTHER SURVEYS

Counsellors who responded to other Canadian and several U.S. surveys have indicated that consulting is a prominent counselling skill and function. In a 1974 survey, Canadian counsellors were asked to respond to the importance of 53 counsellor roles. Counselling teachers and acting as a consultant to them was volunteered by respondents as a vital counselling function (Brown, 1974). From a survey sent to a randomly selected group of elementary counsellors who attended the American Elementary School Guidance Association in 1975 and 1976, Washbourn (1977) noted that 50 percent of the counsellors reported consulting with groups of teachers as a consistent and regular part of their duties. In a California survey (Furlong, Athinson and Janoff, 1979) elementary school counsellors from 43 school districts were asked to rank fourteen counselling activities according to actual roles performed and ideal roles preferred. Respondents ranked individual counselling and consultation as first and second in importance. Biggers (1977) found similar results from a Texas study where elementary counsellors again ranked counselling and consultation first and second as important

counselling activities. In terms of time counsellors commit to various counselling activities, a survey by Kornick (1984) indicates that consulting with teachers, parents, administrators and public service staff ranked third in importance. These results are consistent with more recent studies by Helm (1985), Fairchild (1985) and Knoff (1985) who support the conclusion that one of the primary goals of a counselling program is to provide consultation and inservice training to teachers and parents.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSULTING AS PERCEIVED BY SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Consulting with school staff members is an important counsellor function according to Canadian teachers and administrators. From a list on 14 specific counselling activities which would benefit schools, consulting with teachers was chosen as second in importance by British Columbia superintendents and directors (Allan, 1976). Consulting with teachers was also ranked second in importance by this group as the area of greatest immediate need. These data are supported by a survey conducted by Allan, Doi and Reid (1979). In their questionnaire to British Columbia elementary teachers and principals, respondents were asked to select specific counsellor skills which would benefit their schools. From a list of 14 skills, consulting with teachers was ranked third in importance. Misuraca (1976) found that secondary school principals ranked consulting with teachers

as sixth in importance from a similar list of counsellor activities. An Ontario survey of secondary school principals (Hassard and Costar, 1977) indicates that of six specific ideal roles that the counsellor play, serving as a consultant to the staff and principal was one of two areas which were preferred most.

PERCEIVED NEEDS OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Research suggests that teachers continue to be concerned with discipline situations, classroom management and motivating student achievement. Clark and Hanka (1977) found that the lack of discipline is a major concern for Canadian teachers. A survey by Allan et al (1979) indicates that British Columbia elementary teachers and principals identify "help with discipline problems" to be among their greatest needs.

In a follow-up study of graduates at Bowling Green State University involving elementary teachers with varying years of teaching experience Garguilo and Pigge (1979) found that the need "to motivate student achievement" was ranked first from a list of 26 required teacher competencies. The ability "to maintain order in the classroom and to assist in the development of self-discipline" ranked third. In terms of proficiencies these areas were ranked thirteenth and sixteenth respectively. Special education teachers ranked the ability "to maintain order and to assist in the development of self-discipline" first as a need and thirteenth

as a proficiency. Garigiulo and Pigge concluded that "if given a choice of inservice topics, teachers would probably rate discipline techniques as the number one priority" (p. 341). These results are consistent with Franc's (1970) survey of beginning elementary teachers from twenty-six U.S. school districts. When asked to identify urgent problem areas, teachers ranked "interest" and "attention" as being second in importance.

A survey of beginning secondary school teachers by Moller (1968) identify "motivating students to satisfactory achievement" and "student indifference" as their most frequent and major difficulty. Follow-up interviews with these teachers revealed classroom discipline as a frequent concern. Interestingly, the source of assistance the teachers listed as providing the most help with these difficulties was their fellow teachers. The secondary teachers included in Chruickshank, Kennedy and Myers (1974) U.S. survey identified "invigoration" (vitalizing student interest in learning and improving achievement) and "control" (getting students to behave) as the most bothersome problems they encountered during the school day.

THE COUNSELLOR AS A CONSULTANT

According to the research reviewed, classroom teachers at all levels view the areas of student motivation, classroom management and disruptive behavior as primary problems. In

addition it appears that teachers and administrators view consulting with a counsellor as a potentially useful approach for dealing with such problems. The existence and prevalence of these problem areas suggest that individual counselling with students about these problem areas remains uneconomical and unrealistic in relation to availability of professional time.

Classroom studies also indicate that there are a set of effective strategies for improving student motivation and general classroom behavior. Teacher attention and extinction are among the strategies employed (Marlowe, Madsen, Bowen, Reardon and Logue, 1978; Breyer and Allen, 1975). When token reinforcement is added to these procedures, further improvement is noted (Marlow et al, 1978; Breyer and Allen, 1975). Time-out procedures are frequently used concurrently with these strategies to reduce specific non-attending behavior (Walker, Madson and Buckley, 1969; Wahler, 1968).

Currently researchers are investigating varying approaches for effectively implementing these strategies into classroom settings. Borg, Langer and Wilson (1975) for example, found that teachers who enrolled in a 30 hour course in classroom management significantly increased their students' work involvement and recitation in seatwork situations. Hett (1981) found that a group of teachers trained in the use of behavioral principles in seminar and

follow-up sessions were able to significantly increase the attending behavior of their deviant elementary pupils during the course of a school year. Greenwood, Walker and Hops (1977) cite the effectiveness of a teacher training program for improving academic survival skills among school children. Marlowe's et al (1978) study suggests that counsellors serving as a consultant to classroom teachers provides an effective means for improving student attending behavior.

Each of these programs included one or more of the following strategies.

Teacher Attention

The assumption underlying this procedure is that the classroom milieu normally provides little reinforcement for the attending behaviors of disruptive students. It is believed that only by changing the student's classroom environment can a behavioral repertoire compatible with learning be established and maintained. In an attempt to develop an effective program, provision must be made to reduce any social consequences for disruptive behavior while providing recognition for appropriate behavior.

Using this procedure, perhaps the best way to eliminate disruptive classroom behavior is to find some alternative, incompatible appropriate behavior that can be increased by positive reinforcement, thus automatically decreasing the undesirable behavior. Hence, if a student shouts out in class, the teacher should be encouraged to reinforce hand

raising. If a student is constantly rude, the incompatible behavior of being courteous must be reinforced while the inappropriate behavior is ignored.

The counsellor has a dual function here. He must aid in pinpointing student behavior which the teacher sees as the problem situation. During consulting sessions, he must instruct and encourage the teacher to select and reinforce alternative behaviors when they occur. As it is sometimes difficult for teachers to be consistent in their use of these procedures, support and encouragement is often required from the counsellor. In addition, by having teachers gather data from direct classroom observation (to be described later in this paper) the efficacy of this procedure can be demonstrated.

Token Reinforcement

As noted above, when token reinforcement is added to teacher attention, further improvement in classroom behavior can be expected. Token reinforcers are objects or symbols such as smiley faces, poker chips, slips of paper, points or checkmarks on a workcard, in a notebook or on the chalkboard. The token reinforcers attain value by being exchanged for treats, free time, early dismissal, freedom from daily classroom routine and other special events such as field trips, films or a visiting speaker. The student is allowed to earn tokens for engaging in performances assigned by the teacher and later exchanges these for the preferred event. With

young children the special privilege or event earned is often shared with the entire class. This procedure encourages the peer group to reinforce the deviant student when appropriate behavior occurs. A token system for older students may require the teacher simply to tally the number of points or tokens earned during a specific time, leaving the arrangement of the special privileges or events with the student or often his parents. Once a behavior change is achieved, the tokens can be slowly withdrawn allowing other reinforcers such as teacher and peer recognition and academic success (those more natural to the school setting) continue to support the desired behavior.

Time-out from Positive Reinforcement

"Withdrawing positive reinforcement and eliminating the opportunity to obtain positive reinforcement are commonly employed in our society as punishment for behavior judged as undesirable" (Leitenberg, 1965, p. 428). Time-out procedures are effective for reducing persistent disruptive behavior in classroom settings (Drabman and Spitalnik, 1973; Wahler, 1968). The procedure involves removing the student to an isolated area of the classroom, principal's office or sending him home following the disruptive behavior. For young children a portable partition capable of isolating the student from the rest of the class can serve conveniently as a time-out area. Placing the child in "time-out" for a 5-minute period

is usually sufficient. Following time-out the child should take his place with the rest of the class and reinforcement in the form of teacher attention or token reinforcement must be dispensed immediately the alternative appropriate behavior occurs.

Systematic exclusion (sending the child home) is an effective procedure for reducing the persistent and severely deviant behavior of children (Keirsey, 1969). This procedure involves explaining to the student that specific acts of disturbance, aggression or destruction will result in being sent home for a specific period of time--often a full school day. Homework accompanies the child and his return the following day is made contingent upon its completion. For a full description of systematic exclusion the reader may wish to refer to Krumboltz and Thorsen (1969, p. 89-123).

Eberlein (1979) warns counsellors to consider the legality of implementing any form of painful consequence as part of the behavior management program. It is imperative that teachers are encouraged to gain the full consent of both the parent and the child before using the time-out procedure. The consent should be in writing with the parent and child being in a position to terminate the contract at any time.

Behavioral Contracting

A behavioral contract is a written agreement between two or more people which specifies expected behavior changes and the consequences for appropriate and inappropriate behavior. Academic and social classroom behavior can be changed as a result of such interactions if all parties agree as to what is expected of each (Martin, 1977; Azrin, Azrin and Armstrong, 1977; & Kelley and Stokes, 1984).

Azrin et al (1977), for example, found that behavioral contracting developed as part of a total behavior management program was an effective procedure for reducing the uncooperative and disruptive behavior of twenty-four fifth grade children. Their procedures included assisting the teacher with the development and negotiation of a set of classroom rules for students and a set of rules she agreed to follow in her treatment of her students. These rules were modified for individual students as the need arose and formal written contracts were developed for all agreements. A list of privileges were established by the teacher and students. When all contractual agreements were rated as "good" by the teacher, the student received the privilege agreed upon. Penalties were not imposed for contract violations--only reminders were provided to point out the existence of a problem situation. Each student maintained a graph of the number of agreements which were met. Weekly progress reports were sent to parents. These procedures

resulted in a significant reduction of the uncooperative and disruptive behavior with the improvement in behavior maintaining throughout the entire school year. The following sequence of events are normally included in behavioral contracting for classroom intervention:

(1) The teacher is taught to isolate the problem situation and to pinpoint the specific student behavior she wishes to change.

(2) Next, the behavior is described in such a way that all parties know exactly what the behavior is.

(3) Baseline data is collected by counting the frequency with which the behavior occurs before the contract is negotiated. It is against the baseline data that the efficacy of the contractual program will be evaluated. Baseline data is also useful in determining the seriousness of the problem.

(4) The teacher meets with the student and parent individually to discuss the problem situation.

(5) If behavioral contracting is agreed to, all concerned parties meet together to negotiate the contract. It is important that all members agree to the terms of the contract and that the contract is not imposed upon any member, including the student.

(6) The behavioral contract is negotiated and written, by the teacher, focusing on the expected behavior change. Included in the contract are positive and negative consequences for appropriate and inappropriate behavior. The teacher must remember that the behavioral contract is an incentive program.

(7) All members agree to assess the effects of the contract after a specified length of time. The contract is signed by all parties.

(8) The teacher and/or student carefully monitor the program by counting the frequency of the behavior once the terms of the contract go into effect.

(9) Following the specified length of time, all parties meet to assess the effects of the contract and make necessary adjustments to the program.

The "If ... Then ..." approach to contract writing (Ney and Ney, 1972; DeRisi and Butz, 1976) serves as a popular model. The following is provided as an example of this type of contractual agreement.

CONTRACT

We, the undersigned, agree to the following terms of this contract.

Effective Jan. 20 - Feb. 7

1. If: Tom remains in his seat during class period	Then:	the teacher will grant five points for each hour Tom remains seated. When 100 points have been earned Tom will receive an afternoon swimming pass.
2. If: Tom is able to go through an entire day without hitting, punching or intimidating his classmates	Then:	the teacher will allow Tom to spend the last 30 minutes of school time in an activity of his choice (chosen from a pre-arranged and agreed activity list).
3. If: Tom hits or punches anyone during the course of the school day	Then:	the teacher will send Tom home with homework to be completed before returning to school the next day.
4. If: Tom is sent home from school for hitting or punching	Then:	his parents will send Tom to his room until 3 p.m. or until all homework is completed.

Bonus: If Tom ignores all intimidating from his classmates, he will receive three extra points each day toward a swimming pass.

Teacher agrees:

- to provide one reminder to Tom when he is out of his seat without permission.
- to record all points at the end of the day.

Student agrees:

- to remind the teacher at the end of the day to record points if teacher forgets to do so.
- to respond at once to the teacher's reminder.

Both Student and Teacher agree:

- to meet once a week to total weekly points.
- to meet once a week in order to discuss possible problem areas.

Parents agree:

- not to verbally criticize Tom for being sent home.

Signed _____ Signed _____ Signed _____
Student Parent Teacher

Self-Modification

Self-modification is a procedure for assisting individuals monitor and direct their own behavior through self-observation and reinforcement. There is evidence to suggest that brief training in self-modification procedures can lead to improvement in student study (Kelly and Stokes, 1984); reducing stress (Berman, Graham & Cimmero, 1978); relaxation (Wilson and Mivart, 1973); weight loss (Kincy, 1980; Harris and Halbauer, 1973); and public speaking

(Marshall, Stoian and Andrews, 1977). These programs appear to offer counsellors a set of consulting techniques useful for assisting teachers as they confront attending and other student-related problems in their classrooms.

The following steps are normally included in self-modification programs:

(1) identify the problem situation

(2) determine desired goals

(3) self-recording and charting baseline data

(4) analyse antecedent and consequent events which appear to influence the target behavior

(5) arrange different antecedent and consequent events to develop new, desired behavior

(6) continued self-monitoring of the behavior

(7) adjustment of the intervention procedures as required.

Full a full description of self-modification procedures the reader is referred to Watson and Thorp's book, Self-Directed Behavior: Self-Modification for Personnel Adjustment, 1977.

Classroom Observation

Eberlein (1979) points out that children have the right not to be made worse by counselling programs. He encourages counsellors to monitor all counselling procedures carefully. Perhaps the simplest procedures for evaluating the efficacy of behavior change plans is to instruct and encourage teachers to collect and record student behaviors during

various phases of the counselling programs. The simple process includes the following steps:

(1) Pinpoint the inappropriate behavior to be changed. This is achieved through direct observation of the student's behavior in the classroom.

(2) Count or measure and record the frequency or duration of the pinpointed behavior before implementing the intervention procedures. It is against this baseline that the efficacy of the program will be established.

(3) Continue with daily recording of the target behavior throughout the intervention program.

(4) Periodically check on the behavior to ensure maintenance of the desired effect following the termination of the program.

CONCLUSION

Apparently confusion exists among counsellors as to their role and function. Perhaps as a profession we need to look external to ourselves for answers and guidance. Recent surveys indicate that teachers at both the elementary and secondary level require competencies in areas of classroom management, classroom discipline and motivating student achievement. It appears that both teachers and administrators look to counsellors as a potential source of assistance when dealing with these problem areas. As a consultant the counsellor is best able to assist teachers through inservice training. It appears that teachers are able to learn behavior management procedures during seminar sessions and effectively implement these strategies in their classroom.

This approach had distinct advantages. One advantage is that the counsellor is able to work with groups of teachers and parents rather than with individual children, resulting in the economy of his/her time. In addition to increasing the efficiency of services the counsellor consultant becomes more visible and accountable and thus better able to justify his/her position in the education system.

To enhance consulting as a counsellor skill and function it becomes the responsibility of the counsellor educator to ensure that consulting skills gain a position of prominence in counsellor training programs. "The counsellor consultant comes from a professional preparation programme that does not merely agree intellectually that consultation is good, but systematically plans and offers educational experiences that provide theoretical and practical experience in consultation" (Dinkmeyer and Dinkmeyer, 1979, p. 101).

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